REMARKS

Claims 25 and 27 have been amended. Claims 25, 27 and 29 are pending in this application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the original claims and any other claims in this and other applications.

Claims 25, 27 and 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kume (U.S. Patent No. 6,203,433) in view of Collins (U.S. Patent No. 5,963,951) and in further view of Chopra (U.S. Patent No. 6,631,466). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 25 recites a game task execution management method. The method comprises the act of "registering on a database of the server information . . . including plural items which the players want to register on the server, said items including a current progress status of the game being executed on each of the terminals." In addition, "when . . . a request for participating in the game being currently in progress on another terminal on the network when said request is made" is received, the method comprises the act of "searching at least one terminal on which the game is already started and currently in progress and which matches the request among the terminals currently on the network of the players registered on the database." According to claim 25, the method also comprises "sending to the terminal from which said request for participating in the game is made, the control information necessary for starting the game program from an intervene stage of the game already started and currently in progress on another terminal selected as matching the request, so that the terminal from which said request for participating in the game is made has common control information from said intervene stage of the game for playing the game with the terminal on which the game is already started and currently in progress, whereby the players selected as the team work together in cooperation with one another toward a common task on the game executing on the respective terminals." Applicant respectfully submits that the cited combination fails to teach or suggest the claimed invention.

The Office Action, however, asserts that Kume discloses the limitation "when received from a terminal in response to a player's operation via the network, a request for participating the game being currently in progress on another terminal on the network when request is made, registered on the database." Office Action paragraph 5 (citing Kume col. 1, lines 36-45). Applicant respectfully traverses this assertion for at least the following reasons.

First, the Office Action does not cite to a correct feature from claim 25 for this portion of the rejection. In paragraph 5, the Office Action states that Jume col. 1, lines 36-45 teaches "when received from a terminal in response to a player's operation via the network, a request for participating the game being currently in progress on another terminal on the network when request is made, registered on the database." Applicant respectfully submits, however, that this is not a correct feature of Claim 25.

Moreover, the Office Action omits the following two expressions from its rejection: (1) "searching at least one matching the request among the terminals currently on the network of the players" and (2) "the one on which the game is already started and currently in progress." That is, at the time of the rejection, claim 25 read "when received from a terminal in response to a player's operation via the network, a request for participating in the game being currently in progress on another terminal on the network when said request is made, searching at least one matching the request among the terminals currently on the network of the players registered on the database and the one on which the game is already started and currently in progress." It is only with the above omissions that the Office Action can attempt to read Kume on this limitation, which Applicant respectfully submits is improper.

Second, as described above, the Office Action fails to address the limitation "searching at least one matching the request among the terminals currently on the network of the players registered on the database and the one on which the game is already started and currently in progress," in Claim 25, which includes one of the features of the claimed invention. Specifically, the expression "searching at least one terminal on which the game is already started and currently in progress and matches the request," missing from the rejection, is one of the essential features of the invention.

As argued previously, Kume relates to a network game system which carries out indoor games such as Shogi, Igo, Chess, Othello, Mah-jong, and a fighting-type television game. These games have to be joined and started from the beginning of the games. Specifically, Kume relates to a network game system which searches unjoined and unstarted members and matches some members from the unjoined and unstarted members to start a game by the matched

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members. Kume neither discloses nor suggests "searching at least one terminal *on which the game is already started and currently in progress* and matches the request."

In any event, claim 25 has been amended to clarify that "when received from a terminal in response to a player's operation via the network, a request for participating in the game being currently in progress on another terminal on the network when said request is made, searching at least one terminal on which the game is already started and currently in progress and which matches the request among the terminals currently on the network of the players registered on the database." This feature is not shown in any of the references.

Moreover, the Office Action cites to Kume col. 1, lines 36-45 for the limitation "a request for participating the game being currently in progress on another terminal on the network when request is made, registered on the database." Then, the Office Action states that "However, Kume does not explicitly disclose items including a current progress status of the game being executed on each of the terminals." There is an obvious contradiction between those two statements. In addition, there appears to be no disclosure relating to "a request for participating the game being currently in progress on another terminal on the network when request is made" in Kume col. 1, lines 36-45.

The Office Action also states that the limitation "sending to the terminal all the request control-information necessary for starting the game program from a intervene stage of the game currently being currently in progress on another terminal" is found at Kume col. 3, lines 21-33 and col. 5, lines 48-50. Applicant respectfully traverses this argument for at least the following reasons.

First, the Office Action does not cite to a correct feature or limitation from claim 25. Prior to the Office Action, claim 25 recited "[the step of] sending to the terminal all the request control information necessary for starting the game program from an intervene stage of the game already started and currently in progress on the another terminal selected as matching the request, so that all of the terminals selected as a team have common control information from said intervene stage of the game for playing the game in which the players selected as the team work together in cooperation with one another toward a common task on the game executing on the respective terminals. " The Office Action, however, omits the following two expressions from

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the relevant language of claim 25: (1) "already started and" and "selected as matching the request, so that all of the terminals selected as a team have common control information from said intervene stage of the game for playing the game in which the players selected as the team work together in cooperation with one another toward a common task on the game executing on the respective terminals." Thereafter, the Office Action compares Claim 25 with Kume. It is only with these omissions that the Office Action can attempt to read Kume on this limitation, which Applicant respectfully submits is improper.

Second, the Office Action asserts that "sending to the terminal all the request control-information necessary for starting the game program from a intervene stage of the game currently being currently in progress on another terminal" is disclose at Kume col.3, lines 21-33, and col.5, lines 48-50. However, this assertion is incorrect. Kume col. 3, lines 21-33 states:

> To solve the above-mentioned problems, there is also provided a medium storing a player information collection program for instructing computers to obtain information about play partners of users wishing to play a game through a communication network, the player information collection program comprising: a game request unit that outputs a game request to a server and receives player request issuance timing information specifying time to issue a player request, from the server; and a player request unit that, when the time specified in the player request issuance timing information is reached, outputs the player request to the server and receives information about opposing players from the server.

Kume col. 53, lines 48-50 states:

> When a player request is sent from the client 20, the player request response unit 12c extracts information about opposing players of the user issuing the player request from the user information storage unit 11 and returns it to the client 20 as a response to the player request.

These paragraphs from Kume refer to communications between the server and the client operated by the player before starting the game. Kume neither discloses nor suggests "sending to the terminal all the request control-information necessary for starting the game program *from a intervene stage of the game currently being currently in progress on another terminal*" in the claimed invention.

Third, in addition to the above differences, it is very clear that Kume fails to discloses or suggest the feature "so that all of the terminals selected as a team have common control information from said intervene stage of the game for playing the game in which the players

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selected as the team work together in cooperation with one another toward a common task on the game executing on the respective terminals," which appears to be ignored by the Office Action.

Referring now to paragraph 6 of the Office Action, the Office Action states "In the same field of endeavor, Collins discloses (e.g., a method and apparatus for real-time, online computer searching and matching of database entries based on location and user selectable search criteria). Collins discloses a current progress status of the game being executed on each of the terminals [see Collins, Abstract, Figure 3, col.2, lines 50 to col.3, lines 4 and lines 50-65]." Applicant notes that this paragraph is the same as paragraph 10 of the previous Office Action. No additional reasoning has been provided by the current Office Action.

As stated previously, Collins discloses a computerized on-line dating service for searching and matching people by a percentage match parameter value (see Abstract). The Office Action asserts that "Collins discloses *allowing the players of the team to execute said common task of the game on the respective terminals in corporation with each other while connected to the server via network* [see Collins, Abstract, Figure 3, Col. 2, lines 50-, Col. 3, lines 4, lines 50-65]." Applicant respectfully submits, however, that the Office Action is simply incorrect on this point.

Collins by contrast discloses that "accessing a data-base from a terminal and searching information of the data-base to find out a subscriber matching user search criteria." This does not correspond to the above-cited limitations. In Collins, a user operates the terminal until finding out a subscriber matching user search criteria. However, after finding out the matched subscriber, the user will contact in the real world to the matched subscriber by using a phone or a letter, not the terminal. Accordingly, Collins neither discloses nor suggests the above features, especially "sending to the terminal on the request control information necessary for starting the game program from an intervene stage of the game currently being played on the terminal(s) selected as matching to the request."

The Office Action concludes that "Collins discloses a current progress status of the game being executed on *each* of the terminals", only because Collins discloses "a method and apparatus for real-time, online computer searching and matching of database entries based on location and user selectable search criteria." However, Collins discloses only the online

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computer searching of database entries based on location and user selectable search criteria. Collins does not suggest "a current progress status of the game being executed on each of the terminals" at all.

The Office Action concludes that "Collins discloses a current progress status of the game being executed on *each* of the terminals." Applicant respectfully submits that this conclusion is incorrect. Claim 25 states that "when received from a terminal in response to a player's operation via the network, a request for participating in the game being currently in progress on *another* terminal on the network when said request is made." This means that a player's terminal has not started a game yet but another terminal has already started and executed a game. Claim 25 is not really relevant to "a current progress status of the game being executed on each of the terminals" as set forth in the Office Action.

Referring now to paragraph 8 of the Office Action, the Office Action states that "In the same field endeavor, Chopra discloses (e.g., a parallel string pattern searches in respective ones of array of a computers). Chopra discloses searching at least one matching the request among the terminals currently on the network of the players, and the one on which the game is already started [see Chopra col.21, lines 39-51]."

Chopra col. 21, lines 39-51 states:

> Referring back to step 840, if a nanocomputer detects a match, then the system proceeds to step 860 to determine if the various small patterns are being searched with a single hit or a multi-hit operation. In case the patterns are being searched such that any matching pattern will satisfy the search (single hit), then the system signals a successful match and terminates the search at step 895.

> If the various patterns are being searched with a multi hit operation, then step 870 determines if any more packet data remains to be searched. If so then the system signals the match in step 875 and proceeds to step 855 in order to stream in more data. If not then the system proceeds to step 880 to terminate the search and signal the final match.

Applicant does not disagree that Chopra discloses "parallel string pattern searches in respective ones of array of a computers." However, Applicant disagrees with the conclusion that "Chopra discloses searching at least one matching the request among the terminals currently on the network of the players, and the one on which the game is already started" based upon the above disclosure of parallel string pattern searches in respective ones of array of a computers.

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Applicant submits that Chopra discloses a parallel string pattern searches on network, but does not disclose "the one on which the game is already started."

Paragraph 9 of the Office Action, states that:

> it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the networking art at the time the invention was made to have incorporated Chopra's teachings of a parallel string pattern searches in respective ones of array of a computers with the teachings of Kume to have searching on or ones matching to the request among the terminals currently on the network of the players *for the purpose of provides even greater flexibility for packet filtering in a gateway system* [see Chopra col. 1, lines 60-65]. *However, Kume discloses all of the terminals selected as a team have common control information from said intervene stage of the game for playing the game in which the players selected as a team work together in cooperation with one another toward a common task on the game.*

The Office Action asserts that "to have incorporated Chopra's teachings of a parallel string pattern searches in respective ones of array of a computers with the teachings of Kume to have searching on or ones matching to the request among the terminals currently on the network of the players *for the purpose of provides even greater flexibility for packet filtering in a gateway system.*" Applicant respectfully traverses this assertion as being incorrect. As described the above, Kume neither discloses nor suggests this feature of the claimed invention. Therefore, even if Chopra's teachings is incorporated with the teachings of Kume, the claimed invention is not rendered unpatentable.

Paragraphs 10 and 11 of the present Office Action state:

> 10. In the same field endeavor, Hata discloses (e.g., Game control method). Hata discloses all of the terminals selected as a team have common control information from said intervene stage of the game for playing the game in which the players selected as a team work together in cooperation with one another toward a common task on the game [see Hata paragraph 0003, 001 6] (for resume a game in which a plurality of players take part in where the game has been paused).

> 11. Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the networking art at the time the invention was made to have incorporated Hata's teachings of game control method with the teachings of Kume to have all of the terminals selected as a team have common control information from said intervene stage of the game for

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playing the game in which the players selected as a team work together in cooperation
with one another toward a common task on the game for the purpose of provides
increasing his items by picking up rare items, exchanging items with other players or
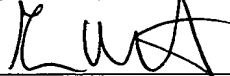increasing his own power to level up [see Hata paragraph 0002].

Applicant respectfully submits, however, that Hata is not valid prior art against the
present application. Hata has an international filing date of May 21, 2003 and a priority date of
May 21, 2002. The present application, on the other hand, has priority dates of March 30, 2000
and March 27, 2001, which are much earlier than Hata's.

As described above, the combination of Kume, Collins and Chopra fails to disclose,
teach or suggest all of the features of the claim 25 invention. Moreover, Hata is not valid prior
art. Accordingly, the rejection should be withdrawn. Claims 27 and 29 are allowable for at least
the same reasons as provided above for claim 25. Accordingly, the rejection should be withdrawn
and the claims allowed.

In view of the above, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for
allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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